

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 ACDA-12 OMB-01
TRSE-00 DHA-05 EB-08 /066 W
-----040846 021741Z /70

R 010822Z NOV 77

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5261
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMCONSUL KARACHI
AMEMBASSY LAHORE
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR PK IR

SUBJ: VISIT OF MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN TO IRAN

REF ISLAMABAD 10694 (NOTAL)

1. RETIRED AIR MARSHAL ASGHAR KHAN, LEADER OF PAKISTAN'S
TEHRIK-I-ISTIQLAL POLITICAL PARTY, MET WITH PRESS OCT 30
DURING HIS FOUR DAY VISIT TO IRAN. HE RESPONDED TO A NUMBER
OF QUESTIONS, EMPHASIZING PARTICULARLY THAT THE OPPOSITION
PAKISTAN NATIONAL ALLIANCE (PNA) OF WHICH HIS PARTY IS A
MEMBER, CONSIDERS FREINDSHIP WITH IRAN A PILLAR OF PAKISTAN
FOREIGN POLICY REGARDLESS OF WHICH PARTY IS IN POWER IN
ISLAMABAD. ASGHAR KHAN REPORTEDLY DENIED THAT ANY MEMBER OF
THE PNA HAD CRITICIZED IRAN, SAYING THAT PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS
WITH IRAN WILL REMAIN "CORDIAL AND BROTHERLY". SHOULD THE PNA
GAIN POWER, PAKISTAN'S FUTURE PARTICIPATION IN CENTO WILL
BE DETERMINED ONLY AFTER CONSULTATION WITH OTHER MEMBERS
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OF THE ALLIANCE, ACCORDING TO THE GENERAL. THE PNA WOULD
ENDEAVOR TO IMPROVE PAKISTAN'S RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES
AND WOULD "SETTLE OUR ISSUES WITH INDIA AND OTHERS
PEACEFULLY", HE STRESSED.

2. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION REGARDING PAKISTAN'S
ACQUISITION OF A NUCLEAR FUEL REPROCESSING PLANT, ASGHAR

KHAN WAS QUOTED, "WE ARE ONLY INTERESTED IN GETTING IT FOR OUR POWER SUPPLY. PAKISTAN HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ATOMIC BOMBS AND WILL NEVER MAKE THEM. A COUNTRY LIKE PAKISTAN SHOULD NOT MANUFACTURE THE ATOMIC BOMB."

3. WITH REGARD TO PAKISTAN'S INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION THE GENERAL SAID HE HAD "NO REASON TO DOUBT THE SINCERITY OF CHIEF MARSHAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR GENERAL ZIA'S PLEDGE TO HOLD ELECTIONS WITHIN SEVEN OR EIGHT MONTHS".

4. WHILE IN TEHRAN THE GENERAL WAS RECEIVED BY THE SHAH AND PRIME MINISTER AMOUZEGAR AND ACCORDED FULL PRESS COVERAGE--INDICATIONS OF IMPORTANCE GOI ATTACHED TO VISIT. ASGHAR KHAN'S THREE-NATION TOUR WILL TAKE HIM NEXT TO SAUDI ARABIA AND THE UAE.

5. BEGIN LOU: COMMENT: PAKISTAN EMBASSY SOURCE STRESSED TO EMBOFF "PRIVATE" NATURE OF ASGHAR KHAN'S VISIT AND ADDED THAT THE GENERAL WISHED NOT ONLY TO EXPLAIN THE PNA'S POINT OF VIEW BUT TO REMOVE ANY MISCONCEPTIONS THE GOI MAY HAVE WITH REGARD TO HIS OWN PERSONAL POSITION. ASGHAR KHAN'S PRESENT VIEWS ON SUCH ISSUES AS CENTO DIFFER BOTH FROM THE PNA AND FROM HIS OWN STATEMENTS MADE DURING THE HEAT OF THE RECENT ELECTION CAMPAIGN. ACCORDING TO EMBASSY SOURCE, THE GENERAL IS IN THE PROCESS OF REVIEWING HIS PARTY'S SITUATION AND KEEPING HIS OPTIONS OPEN WITH REGARD TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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FUTURE PARTICIPATION WITHIN THE PNA. IF SUCH IS THE CASE, DEGREE OF SUPPORT FROM THE THREE COUNTRIES ON HIS CURRENT TRAVEL ITINERARY MAY HAVE DIRECT BEARING ON ASGHAR KHAN'S ULTIMATE DECISION.

6. DURING PAST WEEK LOCAL PRESS HAS GIVEN MORE THAN USUAL COVERAGE TO WHAT IS CHARACTERIZED AS A CAMPAIGN BY NEW PAKISTAN LEADERSHIP TO REASSURE THE GOI RE FUTURE BILATERAL AND REGIONAL RELATIONS. TO PRESENT GOI HAS ISSUED NO OFFICIAL REACTION TO PRESENT SITUATION IN PAKISTAN. MFA FIFTH DEPARTMENT (SUBCONTINENT) HEAD TOLD EMBOFF THAT VISIT WAS STRICTLY PRIVATE AND THAT ASGHAR KHAN WAS RECEIVED BY SHAH ONLY BECAUSE SHAH "KNEW HIM PREVIOUSLY". IT IS MFA OFFICIAL'S VIEW THAT THE GENERAL WAS REPRESENTING HIS OWN PARTY RATHER THAN THE PNA--DESPITE PRESS REPORTS THAT HE WAS PNA SPOKESMAN. END LOU.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

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Control Number: n/a
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Executive Order: N/A
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